

**DOGS FOR BETTER LIVES  
JOB DESCRIPTION**



**Job Title:** Apprentice Assistance Dog Trainer

**Job Status:** Full-Time, Non-Exempt

**Reports to:** Training Director

**Location:** Central Point, Oregon

**Company Overview:**

Recognized nationally as a premier nonprofit organization, Dogs for Better Lives' mission is to professionally train dogs to help people and enhance lives while maintaining a lifelong commitment to all dogs rescued or bred and all people served. Dogs for Better Lives trains and places Assistance Dogs with clients throughout the United States and is supported by a nationwide donor base.

With more than 30 employees on one site in Southern Oregon, Dogs for Better Lives and its staff enjoy nearly 200 days of sunshine annually in Central Point, making it a destination for outdoor enthusiasts of all kinds. Located in the Rogue Valley, employees enjoy close proximity to Medford International Airport, accessibility to major hospitals, hiking trails, golf courses, and ski areas with full availability of all amenities of a big city without the congestion.

**Job Summary:**

The Apprentice Assistance Dog Trainer works with Certified Assistance Dog Trainers and Kennel Technicians during a three-year apprenticeship to master the dog care/training methods of Dogs for Better Lives. The apprentice will also be proficient in public relations, American Sign Language, and people skills necessary to successfully train and place Hearing Dogs, Autism Assistance Dogs, and Program Assistance Dogs, and perform follow-up on teams, and be a benefit to the company.

**Essential Duties and Responsibilities:**

(1-6 months expectation):

- Learns basic American Sign Language.
- Learns all Kennel Tech duties.
- Learns and implements proper procedures for medications, inoculations and maintenance of dog's general health.
- Learns and implements proper procedures for grooming and general care of dogs.
- Works in the development and maintenance of the dog training facility and quarantine kennels, including regular cleaning and feeding.
- Ongoing visits to animal shelters to evaluate dogs.
- Learns to identify breed varieties and ages of canines in addition to choosing and evaluating potential Assistance Dogs.

(6-36th month expectation):

- Continues improving American Sign Language skills.
- Learns and implements proper obedience, tasks, and auditory training methods, with the goal of training Assistance Dogs.
- Learns to evaluate Assistance Dog applicants.
- Participates in client/Assistance Dog placement/follow-up (minimum of 5).
- Learns how to provide training to clients during placement/follow-up visits, with continued assistance to client and Assistance Dog for the life of their "team."
- Learns how to demonstrate Assistance Dog techniques in public settings and professionally represent Dogs for Better Lives through public speaking.

- Learns and implements people skills needed to train clients and help clients and families work through the changes brought about by having an Assistance Dog.
- Learns how to effectively work with the media in order to present a positive DBL image.
- Perform other duties as required by the organization and the Training Director.

#### **Essential Qualifications:**

- High School Diploma or GED required.
- A minimum of one (1) years' experience working with animals and/or dogs.
- Knowledge of, and experience using, operant conditioning techniques.
- Proficient in Microsoft Office Suite.
- Must pass a criminal background check.
- Have a valid Driver's License and excellent driving record.
- Must be able to travel frequently. Each trip can last 5 to 10 days and involve flying and driving, day and night. Must be willing and able to travel up to 9 times per year, for durations of a week or more.
- Desire to complete DFD's three year Apprentice Training Program and become a Certified Assistance Dog Trainer.
- Must be at least 25 years old. Excellent written/oral communication and interpersonal skills. Ability to prioritize while working multiple tasks. People and animal oriented. Experienced in and comfortable with public speaking.
- For the safety of the employee, other employees, and the dogs, an employee must have hearing within normal limits (for an adult, hearing thresholds no greater than 25 dB HL from 500 Hz through 4000 Hz, for both ears, with or without hearing aids, implants or other devices. Employees must be able to hear the wide variety of sounds at different levels and pitches from a variety of directions and distances that dogs make while interacting with people and each other. This includes:
  - Detect barking at all levels and tones
  - Determine direction barking is coming from
  - Detect change in type of bark, tone, volume
  - Detect low growl, direction
  - Hear a dog running behind them
  - Hear talking in a normal range
  - When training a dog, the trainer must be able to hear all the sounds and tones that he/she is training the dog to hear in order to reward behavior and ensure successful outcomes.
- Physically capable of lifting dogs up to 65 pounds, the agility to move quickly, climb stairs, operate office equipment and computers with ease, and the ability to get up and down easily while working and playing with the dogs.
- Ability to communicate using American Sign Language is desirable.

#### **Essential Requirements:**

- Enjoys building and maintaining relationships with staff.
- Successfully able to lead self and others through a process and adhere to timelines.
- Shares in the passion for the mission of Dogs for Better Lives.
- Self-starter and independent but works collaboratively.
- Highly skilled in interpersonal and written communication.
- Respects and maintains privileged confidential information.
- Values continuous learning and seeks ongoing training and development.

***Note: This is a job description, not an employment contract. This job description does not state or imply these are the only duties to be performed by the employee occupying this position. Employees will be required to follow any other job-related duties required by management.***

*Dogs for Better Lives is an Equal Opportunity Employer.*